Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the following orders pertaining to the Non-Select Ranks and restructuring of officers cadre of the Army have been issued by the Government:—

(i) Grant of substantive ranks of Captain at 2 years, Major at 6 years and Lieutenant Colonel at 13 years of service.

(ii) Grant of rank of Colonel (Time Scale) on completion of 26 years of service.

(iii) Upgradation of 750 posts of Lieutenant Colonel in a phased manner with 400 posts having been upgraded in the first year i.e. 2004 and 350 posts to be upgraded in the second year i.e. 2005.

Since the recommendations encompass a wide spectrum of service related issues, no specific time frame for implementation of the entire report can be indicated as some of the recommendations involve consultation with various government and non-government agencies.

Security threat due to proliferation of WMD through sea

198. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation through the sea is one of the main security threat to the world, particularly to India, on account of its vast coastline; and

(b) if so, what measures are taken to address such threat potential and the allocations made for the purpose during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government is prepared to meet any threat along the Indian coastline, including threats from weapons of mass destruction that may arise from the sea.

Agreement between India and Pakistan for reduction of Armed Forces in Siachen

199. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement has lately been reached between Indian and Pakistani authorities to reduce the armed forces in Siachen;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement; and

(c) the steps since taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Special Recruitment Scheme for people of border areas of J&K

200. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has started any special recruitment scheme for the eligible people from the border areas of Jammu and Kashmir near Indo-Pak border in the defence forces;

(b) whether the scheme has since been finalized; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Recruitment is carried out for all districts of Jammu & Kashmir, including border areas, as per recruitment policy in the defence forces. The response from these areas has been adequate. In addition, during the year 2003-2004, 7 Infantry Battalions of Territorial Army (TA) comprising 6 Infantry Battalions of TA on 'Home and hearth concept' and one Infantry Battalion of TA of surrendered militants (Ikhwanis) were sanctioned with a total strength of approximately 7332. Recruitment of about 6262 persons has been made from the State of Jammu & Kashmir for these units.

MIG-21 Crashes

201. DR. AKHILESH DAS:
DR. PRABHA THAKUR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether another MIG-21 jet crashed on January 4, 2005; if so, where and in what circumstances;